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ABSTRACT

The goal of democratic understanding and civic values is within the history/social science framework. The strand of national identity falls under the goal of democratic understanding and civic values. This research project found that national identity can be developed among multicultural 5th-grade students through the teaching of national symbols, traditions, and songs. Students were given group pre- and posttests. The tests included four U.S. historical icons to identify. Following the pretest, students performed research, and discussed historical U.S. songs based upon the icons. The results of the lessons, research, and posttesting found that students knowledge about the four icons, and what being an American means to them greatly increased. It was recommended that student attainment of national identity be researched further. (LB)

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Developing National Identity Within Fifth Grade Multicultural Students

Carey Olmscheid

Spring 1998

SO 030 735

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Introduction

Within the History - Social Science Framework is the goal of democratic understanding and civic values. The strand of national identity falls under the goal of democratic understanding and civic values, and the development of national identity is crucial to this curricular goal. According to the History Social Science Framework, "the curricular goal of democratic understanding and civic values is centered on an essential understanding of the nation's identity..." The attainment of a national identity was the primary focus of this research.

Reviewing the fifth grade curriculum strands and the forming of a new nation of many immigrants and building a common identity, a national identity, it would seem logical that all students would develop a national identity through the fifth grade curriculum. As an instructor of fifth grade students, one instructs students on United States History and Geography: Making a New Nation. Understanding the history of the country one lives in is fundamental in the forming of a national identity with that country. In the United States with its many immigrant groups, the development of a national identity within elementary students should be a chief concern of elementary instructors.

The topic of national identity relates well to other curricular areas. The visual and performing arts curriculum can blend well with the forming of a national identity through the use of music, or dramatic presentations. Some songs that lend a hand in the forming of a national identity are: 1) "Your a Grand Old Flag," 2) "My Country tis of Thee," 3) "This Land is Your Land,"

and 4) "America the Beautiful." Many literature experiences are available for students and there are many choices that can be found in the Literature for History - Social Science (k-8), (1993). Some example of literature that can be utilized are: 1) In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson, Lord (1984), and 2) Sign of the Beaver, Speare (1983). Many historical documents exist that assist in the development of a national identity and some of these are: The Declaration of Independence, The United States Constitution, and The Bill of Rights. Under the area of English language arts there are many biographies of past and current figures working toward the betterment of our nation and unity.

According to the History - Social Science Framework (1997), "The United States has grown increasingly diverse in its social and cultural composition and ... as our people have become increasingly diverse, there is broad recognition that we are one people. Whatever our origins, we are still Americans." With this in mind, one may wonder how can national identity be instilled in first generation immigrant students who have strong ties to their native cultures? Today's educators have to tackle the challenge of building a sense of national identity in their often diverse classrooms by using many different resources. These resources may range form textbooks and reference materials to patriotic songs.

Based on the emphasis and the importance of developing a national identity within our nation's elementary students, a literature review was conducted on the development of national identity among multicultural elementary populations. It was concluded following the review that there is a

lack of research in the area of national identity, and that was a shocking discovery as national identity is so vital to the History - Social Science Framework. As a result of the findings from the literature review, a research study was conducted on the development of national identity among fifth grade students.

Statement of Hypothesis

As was mentioned above, the focus of this research project was to determine if national identity can be developed in multicultural elementary populations, with the fifth grade being the focus of this study. The specific question to be answered is simply: Can students attain a sense of national identity through the teaching of national symbols, traditions, and songs? While answering this question, supplemental questions will also be evaluated. These questions are:

1) What supplemental material can be utilized along with the text book to help develop national identity?

2) Are these methods of instruction effective in strengthening students' national identity?

Through the process of conducting research, the above questions will be answered, and it will be shown that national identity can be instilled in the minds of one particular fifth grade classroom.

Description of Population

This research was conducted in the city of Westminster, California. The population of the school and its surrounding area is made up of a low socio - economic mix of cultures. Many of the students in the research are first

generation immigrants who came to the United States with their parents. The population for the research study was a self - contained fifth grade classroom with thirty - one students. The break down of students by nationality and gender is as follows:

Vietnamese	14
Hispanic	10
White (non - Hispanic)	6
Filipino	1

boys ---------- 14 girls ---------- 17

With such a diverse classroom makeup, many views of national identity exist and the challenge was to develop a common view of national identity for all students.

Research Design and Methods

Prior to conducting the research, the research design had to be determined. The research design for this project was a one group pretest - post test design. Because this research was conducted in an established self contained classroom, there was no random assignment and all students had similar experiences during the research.

For the purpose of this research a simple pretest was given prior to any instruction in order to determine the students' current view of national identity and what it meant to them. This simple pretest included four icons of the United States culture and one question. The four icons (displayed with no names as to what they were) for the pretest and the question were as follows:

1) The Statue of Liberty 2) The Liberty Bell

3) Uncle Sam 4) The United States flag

5) What does the United States mean to you?

The results of the pretest showed a definite need for instruction on these national icons and to help students develop a sense of what the United States means to them. These results were as follows.

1) **The Statue of Liberty** : Very few students knew that this was the statue of liberty and few knew that she stands for liberty and freedom for all who come to this nation.

2) **The Liberty Bell:** Like the statue of liberty, very few students even knew what this icon was let alone what it stands for.

3) **Uncle Sam:** Out of the four icons in the pretest, this was the least known. A few students knew he was Uncle Sam, but what he stands for was not known by nearly all students.

4) **The United States flag:** Out of the four icons in the pretest, this was the best known. All students knew this was the flag of the United States, and many said that it stands for freedom. But, like the other icons, the knowledge of what the flag stands for was limited.

5) **What does the United States mean to you?** In response to this question, nearly all students replied that the United States means freedom to them. However, very few told why it means freedom to them or why we have these freedoms.

These results were an excellent starting place for lessons and student research projects on these icons and what they stand for in order to develop a better

sense of national identity and what America means to them.

Following the pretest, classroom lessons and student research projects were conducted to develop meaning within the students as to what national identity is to them. The lessons for the students were primarily on historical songs as the bulk of the learning was left up to the students when they conducted their research and discovered the history and meaning behind the icons. The songs that were shared and discussed with the students were as follows:

1) "This Land is Your Land"

2) "My Country tis of Thee"

3) "Your a Grand Old Flag"

4) "America the Beautiful"

5) "The Pledge of Allegiance"

6) "The Star Spangled Banner"

When lessons were conducted on the above songs, they were done on different days and each song was discussed. The discussion of the songs involved looking at the songs critically and analyzing them as to what the meaning is behind the song and why it was written. Prior to group work, copies of the songs were given to each student and the songs were read through line by line and examined briefly as to what they mean. Students were then instructed to work in their table groups and to discuss the song and to look up any words that did not make sense to them. After the small group discussion and research, each group shared what they discovered with the class. Many group obviously had discovered some of the same things, but it gave them

more reinforcement as to what the songs mean and what their historical value is.

Following the lessons and small group projects on the songs, students were informed as to what was to come next; group research projects on the four icons. As was mentioned previously, the icons for the student group research projects were:

1) The United States Flag

2) The Liberty Bell

3) The Statue of Liberty

4) Uncle Sam

As the classroom was already divided into table groups it was not necessary to assign students to groups. Seven table groups were in the class. Three of the groups had five members, while the other four groups had four members. Each student in the group was assigned an icon to conduct research on. In groups that had more than four members, one icon had two members conducting research on it.

Each member of the group was responsible to become an expert on the icon that was assigned to them. Students were given a week to conduct their research and classroom time was allowed for the research. Students were shown several sources they could use for their projects and these included; 1) library books, 2) encyclopedias, and the 3) Groiler CD encyclopedia. Students were not limited to these sources and were allowed to utilize any resources they could find.

Following the completion of the research projects, group members

instructed the other members of their group on their findings so that each member could know what the icons represent. When discussions were complete, groups put their reports together as group units and gave reports to the class on their findings.

When student research projects were completed and reported a post - test was given to the students to determine what they had learned though the songs and their research. The post - test was identical to the pre - test in order to determine what students had learned.

Materials used for this research project included copies of songs and reference materials. Song and reference materials are listed below.

Songs:
1) "America the Beautiful"
2) "This Land is Your Land"
3) "Your a Grand Old Flag"
4) "My Country tis of Thee"
5) "The Pledge of Allegiance"
6) "The Star Spangled Banner"

Reference materials:
1) library books
2) encyclopedias
3) Groiler CD encyclopedia

Results

At the completion of the lessons, student research and post - testing, it was found that students' knowledge about the four icons and what being an American means to them had greatly increased. In reviewing the hypothesis

for this research: Can students attain a sense of national identity through teaching of national symbols, traditions and songs?, it can be reported that students can attain a sense of national identity based on post - test results.

Looking back at the two supplemental questions for this research;

1) What supplemental material can be utilized along with the text book to help develop national identity?

2) Are these methods of instruction effective in strengthening students' national identity?

One can concluded that the materials utilized in this research were useful and effective in developing a sense of national identity among fifth grade students. All questions for this research were answered through pre - test, instruction, and post - test results. The results of the post - test were very positive as students demonstrated that they had learned what the icons stand for and had a better sense of what it means to be an American. The results from the post - test are below.

1) **The Statue of Liberty** : All students knew that this was the statue of liberty and all students knew that she stands for liberty and freedom for all who come to this nation.

2) **The Liberty Bell:** Like the statue of liberty, all students knew that this was the Liberty Bell, the history behind it and what it represents.

3) **Uncle Sam:** All students knew that this was Uncle Sam following the research and what he represents to our nation.

4) **The United States flag:** All students knew this was the flag of the United States and many said that it stands for freedom following the

pre - test. Following the research and reporting, all students knew the history behind the flag and how it has changed over time as our nation has grown and changed.

5) What does the United States mean to you? In response to this question, all student still reported that the United States means freedom to them. The main difference between the pre - test and post - test answers to this question was that students could now say why the United States means freedom to them.

In comparing pre - test and post - test results, it was discovered that students' knowledge had increased substantially based on student answers on the post - test, as well as student research projects.

Conclusions

Following the completion of the research, and reviewing the research hypothesis, it can be concluded that one can help students attain a sense of national identity through teaching of national symbols, traditions and songs. In reviewing the History - Social Science Framework , we find the strand of national identity under the goal of democratic understanding and civic values. Based on the literature review conducted prior to research, and the lack of research on the topic, it is clear that there needs to be more research in this area. Based on post - test findings, this research project was a success, but without special attention to this area, how do we know if students are developing a sense of national identity? One could say that educators build on students national identity knowledge through the educational process as students progress through the grades. If this is true, how can this be tested?

Overall, there are no regrets in conducting this research, and in the future the methods and lessons utilized here will be used again and built upon to improve students national identity ideals.

Recommendations

The main recommendation for this curricular area is that there be more research conducted in order to determine if students are really developing a sense of national identity and if instruction in this area is effective. Also what can teachers do to instill a sense of national identity in the multicultural classroom. Educators need to evaluate their students' national identity development and to determine what they need to do in order to improve upon their students knowledge base. As stated previously, according to the History Social Science Framework, "the curricular goal of democratic understanding and civic values is centered on an essential understanding of the nation's identity..." With this in mind, it can be said that the development of national identity in our students is crucial to meeting this curricular goal.

References

History -Social Science Framework. (1997). California Department of Education.

Literature for History - Social Science. (1993). California Department of Education.

Samples

This Land is Your Land

This land is your land,
this land is my land,
From California to
the New York island.
From the redwood forest
to the Gulf Steam waters,

This land was made for you and me.

As I was walking
that ribbon of highway,
I saw above me, the endless skyway
I saw below me, the open valley,

This land was made for you and me.

My Country tis of Thee

My country tis of thee,
sweet land of liberty,
of thee I sing.

Land where my fathers died,
land of the pilgrim's pride.

From every mountain side,
let freedom ring!

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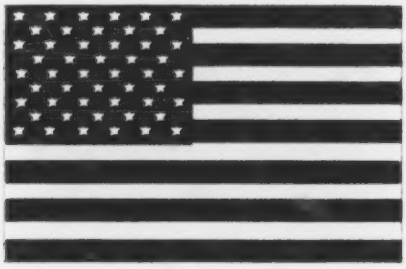
Your a Grand Old Flag



Your a grand old flag,

your a high flying flag,

and for ever in peace may you wave.

Your the emblem of, the land I love

the home of the free and the brave.

Every heart beats true for the red, white

and blue

where there's never a boast or a brag.

Should old acquaintance be forgot,

keep your eye on the grand old flag.

America the Beautiful

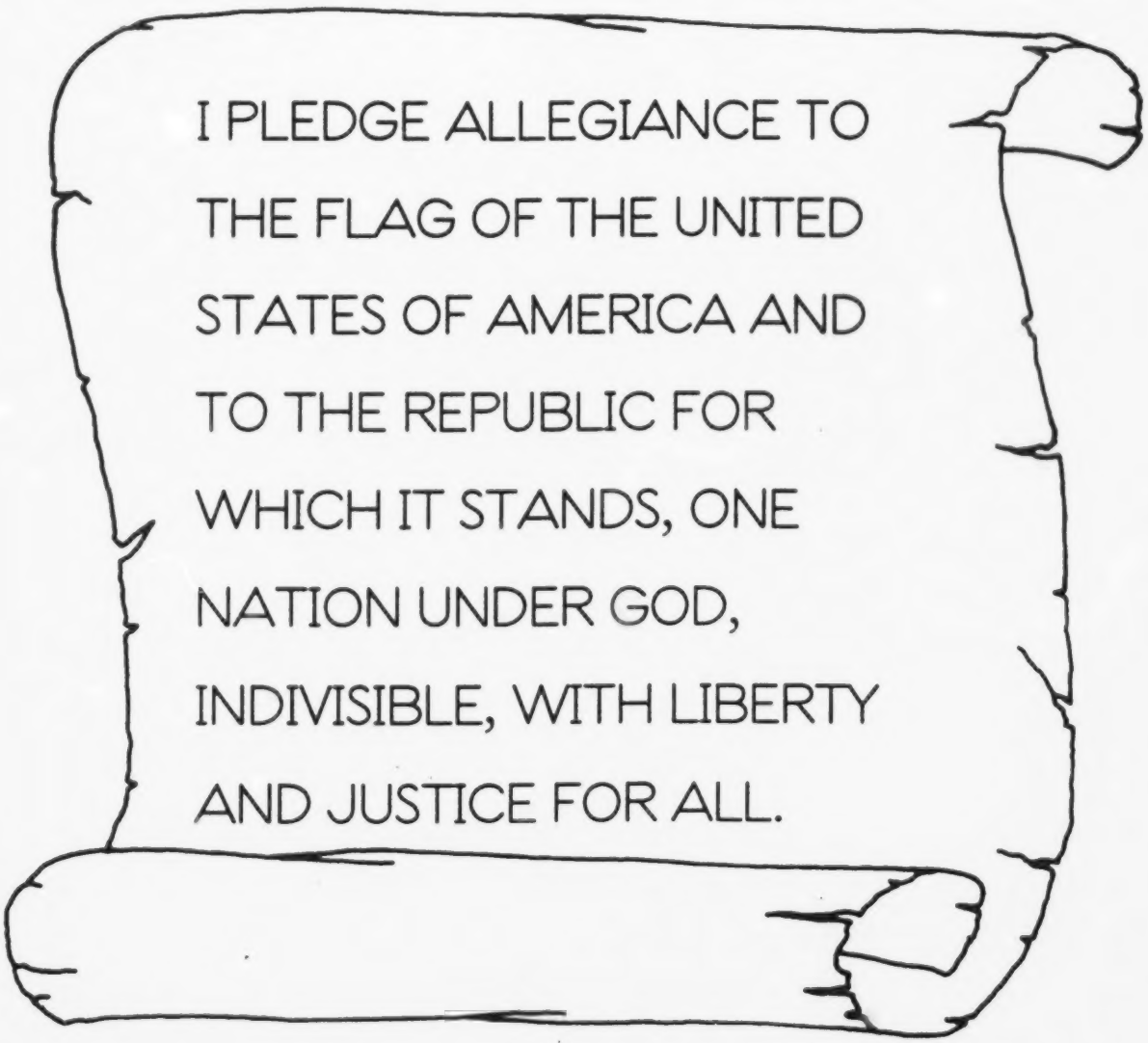
Oh beautiful for spacious skies,
for amber waves of grain.
For purple mountains' majesty,
above the fruited plains.

America, America God sheds
his grace on thee,
and crown thy good
with brotherhood,
from sea to shining sea.

The Pledge of Allegiance

Francis Bellamy of Boston, Massachusetts, believed that American school children should make a promise of loyalty to the United States. He wrote the Pledge of Allegiance in 1892. Originally it contained the words, "my flag." Those words were changed in 1923 by the First National Flag Conference. In 1942, Congress made the pledge an official vow of loyalty to the United States. In 1954, the words "under God" were added.

Here is the Pledge of Allegiance as we say it today:



Can you say the Pledge from memory? When you learn it, color the badge on page 72 and wear it proudly.

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How "The Star-Spangled Banner" Was Written

In 1812 America went to war against England. The English wanted America to stop trading with the French, and they were taking sailors from American ships. The British attacked the new capitol, Washington, D.C., and burned the President's house and other buildings in 1814. When they went back to their ships, they took Dr. William Beanes as a prisoner. The British were angry because Dr. Beanes had arrested British soldiers.

President Madison sent Francis Scott Key to Baltimore to rescue Dr. Beanes. Mr. Key was a lawyer and a friend of Dr. Beanes. Key argued with the British, and they finally agreed to release Dr. Beanes, but the Americans were not allowed to return to Baltimore.

From their ship they watched as the British attacked Fort McHenry. The battle began at dawn on September 13 and continued through the night. Francis Scott Key was happy when morning came and he saw the American flag was still flying. He was a poet and wrote a poem, "The Defense of Fort McHenry," about how he felt. That poem was later set to music and called "The Star-Spangled Banner." Congress officially made "The Star-Spangled Banner" our national anthem in 1931.

Answer these questions from the information you have just read.

1. Who burned the president's house in 1814? _____

2. Why did Mr. Key go to Baltimore? _____

   _____

3. From where did Mr. Key watch the bombardment? _____

4. What was the name of the poem Mr. Key wrote? _____

5. What is our national anthem? _____

   _____

6. When did Congress officially adopt the national anthem? _____

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Display of the Flag

The Continental Congress decided on June 14, 1777, that the United States flag would have 13 stripes and 13 stars, one stripe and one star for each colony. As other states joined the Union, Congress decided to keep 13 stripes for the original colonies and add a star for each new state.

Government offices and schools fly the flag every day. Many people display the flag on important national holidays: Lincoln's birthday, Washington's birthday, Independence Day, Memorial Day, Veteran's Day, and Flag Day (June 14).

The Federal Flag Code is a set of rules for displaying the flag. Here are some of those rules:

- ☆ The flag should not be flown outside in bad weather.
- ☆ The flag must never touch the ground.
- ☆ A flag should be flown near every school during school hours.
- ☆ No other flag may ever be placed above the U.S. flag.
- ☆ The flag may never be used in advertising of any kind.
- ☆ A flag in poor condition should be destroyed by burning.
- ☆ When the national anthem is played and a flag is displayed, all people should face the flag and salute.
- ☆ The flag is flown at half staff to show mourning for the death of a high ranking government official or past president.

Read the sentence and fiil in the blanks.

1. The flag should not be flown o_ _ _ _ _ _ in bad weather.
2. June 14 is our national _ l _ _ day.
3. The flag must never touch the _ _ _ _ _ d.
4. The _ _ _ g Code is a set of rules for displaying the flag.
5. A flag should fly during school hours at every _ _ _ _ _ l.
6. The flag is flown at half staff to show _ o _ _ _ _ _ _ .
7. An old flag should be destroyed by _ _ r _ _ _ _ .
8. The flag has one stripe for each _ _ _ _ _ y.

Put the printed letters together in order to spell another name for the flag.

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

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Puzzle Strips

Cut apart these strips. Mix them up and try to organize them in the correct order.

OH, SAY CAN YOU SEE BY THE DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT

WHAT SO PROUDLY WE HAIL'D AT THE TWILIGHT'S LAST GLEAMING,

WHOSE BROAD STRIPES AND BRIGHT STARS THROUGH THE PERILOUS FIGHT

O'ER THE RAMPARTS WE WATCH'D WERE SO GALLANTLY STREAMING?

AND THE ROCKETS' RED GLARE, THE BOMBS BURSTING IN AIR,

GAVE PROOF THROUGH THE NIGHT THAT OUR FLAG WAS STILL THERE.

OH, SAY DOES THAT STAR-SPANGLED BANNER YET WAVE

O'ER THE LAND OF THE FREE AND THE HOME OF THE BRAVE?

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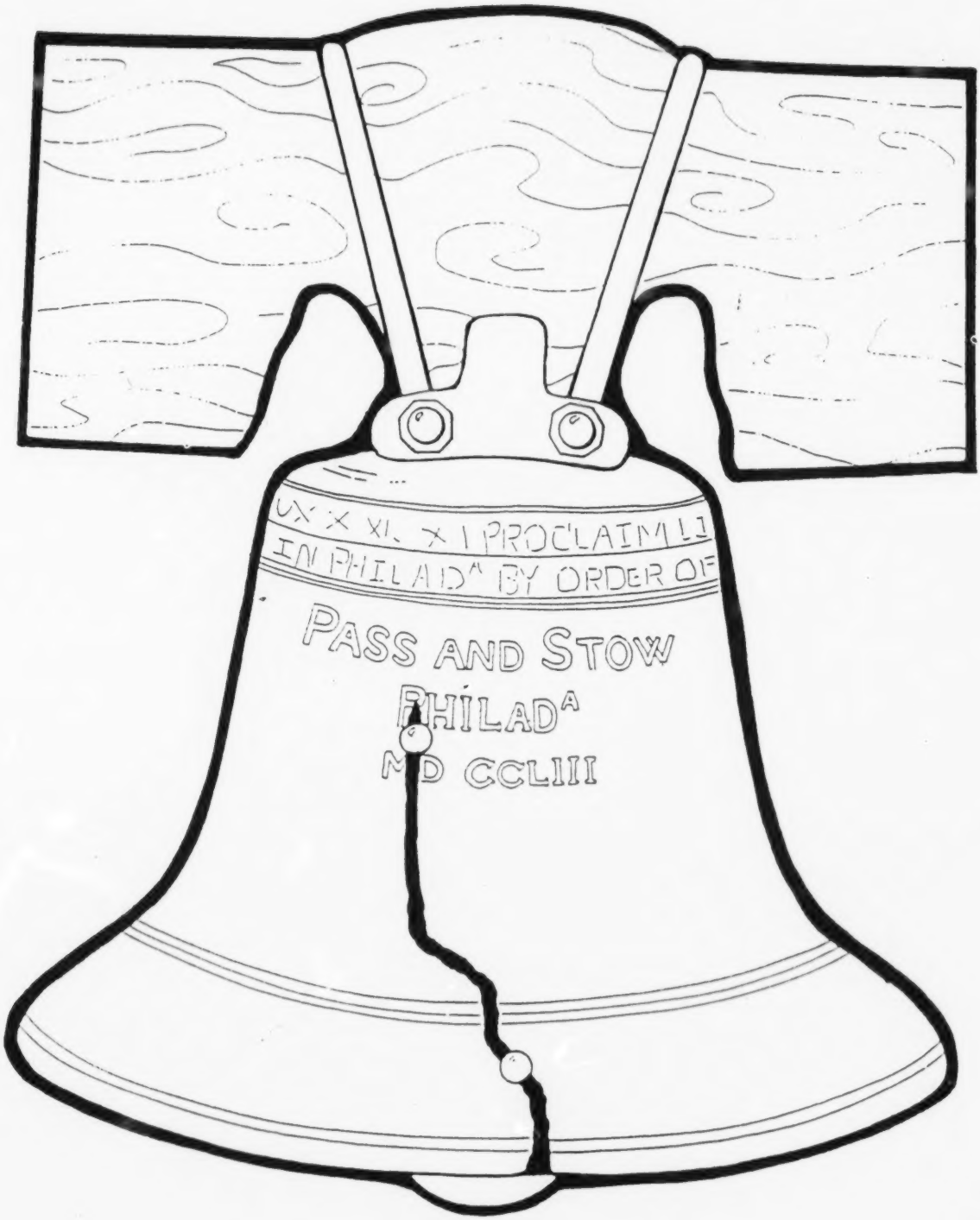

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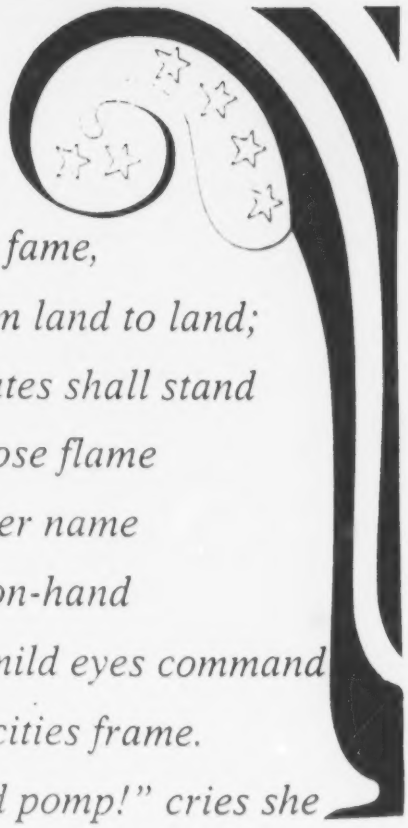
"The New Colossus"



Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me.
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Emma Lazarus
Jewish immigrant from Russia

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The Statue of Liberty

The Statue of Liberty has always been a symbol of welcome and a promise of freedom for immigrants to the United States of America. The statue was given to the United States by the people of France in 1884. They wanted to have it ready by the Centennial in 1876, but it was delayed because France was involved in a war with Prussia. Frederic Bartholdi designed and sculpted the statue. He was sent to America to complete his plans. As he sailed into the harbor at Bedloe's Island, he knew that is where the statue should be. He decided to make the statue a lady as a symbol of liberty, and that she would face the ocean with a greeting and a promise. He decided to call it Liberty Enlightening the World. Bartholdi talked to President Grant and it was agreed that France would build the statue and the United States would build the base and pedestal.

The seven spikes in the statue's crown reach out to the seven seas and the seven continents. The seven spikes also stand for seven liberties.

1. *Civil Liberty* _____
2. *Moral Liberty* _____
3. *National Liberty* _____
4. *Natural Liberty* _____
5. *Personal Liberty* _____
6. *Political Liberty* _____
7. *Religious Liberty* _____

Discuss what you think each of these means. Next to each liberty, list what kinds of activities you can do because you enjoy this freedom.

Name the seven continents and the seven seas.

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	Continents	Seas
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____
7.	_____	

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